# Y.M.C.A. 'not a gay anthem' says Village People founder - and he was happy for Trump to use it



Victor Willis, the founder of the iconic disco group Village People, has voiced his thoughts on two contentious issues concerning the 1970s hit Y.M.C.A.: its use in Donald Trump’s 2024 presidential campaign and its classification as a “gay anthem.” In a detailed Facebook post on December 2, the 73-year-old singer-songwriter provided insight into his perspective on these matters.

In his post, Willis reflected on why he allowed Trump to use Y.M.C.A. at campaign rallies, despite having previously requested the former president to refrain from its use during the 2020 election cycle. He stated that he “didn’t have the heart” to block the song when he realised Trump appeared to “genuinely like” it and was “having a lot of fun” with it. Moreover, Willis pointed out that the song has significantly benefitted in terms of chart performance and sales since being part of Trump’s events. “Therefore, I’m glad I allowed the President Elect’s continued use of Y.M.C.A.,” he expressed, acknowledging the song’s resurgence and thanking Trump for his choice to incorporate it into his campaign.

Willis also clarified that Trump had received the appropriate licensing from BMI to utilise the track during his events. He stressed that although he supports Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in the upcoming election, he would not pursue action to prevent Trump from playing the song, as he deemed it “stupid and just plain hateful” to do so.

The controversy surrounding the use of artists’ music by Trump is well-documented, with several other musicians—such as Beyoncé, Celine Dion, and the Foo Fighters—having publicly condemned the former president for similar actions. In contrast, Willis’s stance diverges from these sentiments, as he acknowledges the financial benefits associated with Trump’s association with Y.M.C.A. The song recently ascended to the top of Billboard’s Top Dance/Electronic Digital Song Sales chart, marking more than four decades since its original release, and it is estimated to have generated millions in revenue since its inclusion in Trump’s campaign repertoire.

In regards to the characterization of Y.M.C.A. as a "gay anthem," Willis firmly criticises this notion, labelling it “completely misguided” and “damaging to the song.” He expressed his intent to take legal action against any media outlet that inaccurately brands the song this way starting in January 2025, all while conceding that he personally does not mind if members of the LGBTQ+ community interpret it as their anthem. “This assumption is also based on the fact that the YMCA was apparently being used as some sort of gay hangout,” he elaborated, challenging the validity of this interpretation by stating, “get your minds out of the gutter.”

The song has long been associated with the LGBTQ+ community, with many viewing its lyrics as a nod to the YMCA’s status as a cruising destination and the album it featured on, titled "Cruisin'," adding to this perception. Willis, however, has consistently sought to broaden the song's appeal beyond a singular identity. In a previous statement from 2020, he affirmed, “No one group can claim Y.M.C.A. as somehow belonging to them or somehow their anthem.”

In his concluding remarks, Willis reiterated his stance that Y.M.C.A. speaks to people of all backgrounds, including those who support Trump. He firmly stated, “the song is not really a gay anthem other than certain people falsely suggesting that it is.” As these discussions unfold, Willis’s comments on Y.M.C.A. underscore the complexities surrounding its legacy in both music history and cultural interpretation within the LGBTQ community.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.stereogum.com/2289393/village-people-singer-thanks-donald-trump-for-using-y-m-c-a-denies-its-a-gay-anthem/news/> - Corroborates Victor Willis's Facebook post on allowing Trump to use 'Y.M.C.A.' and the financial benefits it brought, as well as his denial of the song being a 'gay anthem'.
* <https://consequence.net/2024/12/village-people-ymca-trump/> - Supports Willis's defense of Trump's use of 'Y.M.C.A.' and his clarification that the song is not a 'gay anthem'.
* <https://www.stereogum.com/2289393/village-people-singer-thanks-donald-trump-for-using-y-m-c-a-denies-its-a-gay-anthem/news/> - Details the licensing from BMI that allowed Trump to use 'Y.M.C.A.' and Willis's support for Kamala Harris despite not preventing Trump from using the song.
* <https://consequence.net/2024/12/village-people-ymca-trump/> - Explains Willis's initial request for Trump to stop using 'Y.M.C.A.' due to fan complaints and the subsequent decision to allow its continued use.
* <https://music.mxdwn.com/2024/12/02/news/village-people-vocalist-victor-willis-thanks-trump-for-using-ymca-during-presidential-campaign/> - Mentions the historical context of Village People's approval and subsequent changes in stance on Trump using their music during the 2020 election cycle.
* <https://www.stereogum.com/2289393/village-people-singer-thanks-donald-trump-for-using-y-m-c-a-denies-its-a-gay-anthem/news/> - Discusses the financial benefits and chart performance improvements of 'Y.M.C.A.' due to its use in Trump's campaign.
* <https://consequence.net/2024/12/village-people-ymca-trump/> - Clarifies Willis's intention to take legal action against media outlets that inaccurately label 'Y.M.C.A.' as a 'gay anthem' starting in January 2025.
* <https://www.stereogum.com/2289393/village-people-singer-thanks-donald-trump-for-using-y-m-c-a-denies-its-a-gay-anthem/news/> - Addresses the misconception about the YMCA being a gay hangout and Willis's stance that the song is not specifically a gay anthem.
* <https://consequence.net/2024/12/village-people-ymca-trump/> - Highlights Willis's broader appeal for the song beyond the LGBTQ community and its widespread use in various events and media.